The Church of Christ Today

June 5, 1938.

1 F 4 9 2

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TODAY.

Mtt.16:18 "On this rock I will build my Church.

INTRO. The Church was once thot of as-
the mother of art
the guardian of science
the healer of the sick
the founder of education
the soucre of benevolence

Today, in the minds of many the church is thot of as an institution which has ceased to function, a hangover of past ages but which is being kept alive by a group of men who button th their collars in the back and who keep it going for their own interests.

The Church is highly criticised and blamed for nearly everything, nowadays.

As a result there has crept into the churc a sort of a defeatist spirit.

In times of victory the danger to character is arrogance, in times of difficulty the danger is cowardice. And what spineless people some church members are! They have seemingly forgotten that the world is what it is, not because of the Church, but in spite of it.

There is a criticism of the Church that is well-deserved and I have often pointed out such to you. But this morning I shall endeavor to set forth my personal belief and cinfidence in th Chirch of Christ. Am proud of being a minister, even tho I feel myself unworthy of the honor, and I speak today out of an experience of ~~29~~ 36 yrs in the ministry, ~~25~~ of which I have spent here with you.

I. I am proud of the Church because of its histor and membership in it links one to a great heritage.

1. The small band of discouraged followers of of Christ

3. The persecuted Church until Constantine made it the religion of the Empire and embroidered on his battle flags the inscription," By this sign Conquer"- the Cross.

3. Then a period of growth and prosperity, consequently arrogance and selfishness, then division- it fell apart into two great branches, the Greek Catholic and the Roman Catholic.

4. Then the Dark Ages, the overpowering of the Empire by the Visigoths and the Huns. But the Church weathered the storm and penetrated into the pagan ranks until they in turn became Xnized.

5. Then another period of growth and prosperity followed, as usual, by corruption in the Church.

6. Then the clean-up, the Reformation and religious renaissance.
Luther, John Knox, Calvin.
Pilgrims and Puritans in America, establishing a free gov't, making democracy possible. Then John Wesley and others who freed the Church from formalism, greed and unbelief.

7. Today the Christian Church is an ageless fellowship of the only enterprise that has come down thru the ages as vibrant and vital as it was in the beginning. A glorious history, in spite of all its mistakes and reversions and corruptions. I am proud to belong to it!

II. But what one thing does the Church do today that no other enterprise even attempts to accomplish?

1. It is the unique business of the Church to keep ~~it/this~~ alive in men an awareness of God, to create in human hearts a sense of reverence, to make people sensitive to intangible values and invisible forces.

2. The Kingdom of God as set forth by Josus is not just a plan for the social and economic improvement of the world. The Church aims to spiritualize all life and goes farther than any reform. It goes beyond social justice to divine justice. It is not concerned with the distribution of wealth but with the stewartship of wealth, which is something entirely different.

3. The function of the church is to make men see more than the eye can see, feel more than the hands can touch, hear more than the ear can hear. It aims to/ center lives in God not in self; it holds out to all people redemption from sin thru the life and death of Christ; it awakens in man a new spirit and an unselfish love and regard for life and all its manifestations.

4. If the Church should cease to be, man would no longer keep their faces toward God, and life would become not only futile, but terrible. Geo.A.Fitch's description of the fall of Nanking.

No, there is no other institution that is doing for humanity what the Church is doing. Socialism may humanize life, education may rationalize life, business may mechanize life but the Church must spiritualize life.

III. The Church of Christ, in spite of all its failings and shortcomings, is dedicated to create among men a new sense of oneness. The Church ever seeks to reconcile man to man, group to group, class to class. The Church recognizes no boundary lines of race, color or society.

1. Humanity is falling apart today. Neither culture nor language nor science and invention, nor reforms nor anything seems to be able to get us together and hold us together. The world is in dire need of reconciliation, good-will and understanding. It is high time for the various branches and divisions of the Church to drop their non-essential differences, their emphasis on certain forms of ecclesiasticism and creeds and give to the world the reconciliation, good-will and understanding which will ~~restore the confidence of the~~ peoples in one another and establish between them a fellowship worthy of God's children.

4. In the light of this great need of humanity what does the primacy of St.Peter amount to? or the importance of St.Augustine, or the significance of Paul or Wesley or John Knox or Calvin or Luther? The one big important thing to the Church today is the primacy of Jesus Christ who established the Church and who gave his life for it. "In God's name let us get together. The things that separate us are as nothing /ø/bø/ compared to the one fact which makes us one".